

His Holiness the Pope dies in Rome

The Vatican announced the death of His Holiness Pope Francis early on Monday morning at his residence in the Vatican's Casa Santa Maria.

Although Pope Francis had been ill and spent more than a month in hospital recently, he had returned to the Vatican, appearing on the balcony of St Peter's Basilica in Rome only yesterday on Easter Sunday to bless the world.

He was born in Argentina in 1936, the first South American to become head of the Roman Catholic Church and many tributes have been paid to the 88-year-old pontiff.

Prime Minister

Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer said: "I join millions around the world in grieving the death of His Holiness Pope Francis.

"His leadership in a complex and challenging time for the world and the church was courageous, yet always came from a place of deep humility.

"Pope Francis was a pope for the poor, the downtrodden and the forgotten. He was close to the realities of human fragility, meeting Christians around the world facing war, famine, persecution and poverty. Yet he never lost hope of a better world.

"That hope was at the heart of his papacy. His determination to visibly live out his faith inspired people across the world

to see afresh the church's teachings of mercy and charity.

"With his death, we are reminded once more of his call to care for one another across different faiths, backgrounds, nations and beliefs.

"My thoughts are with Catholics across the world, and the Roman Catholic church. May His Holiness Rest in Peace."

First Minister

First Minister of Scotland John Swinney said: "I am deeply saddened to learn that His Holiness Pope Francis has died. He was a voice for peace, tolerance and reconciliation in our society.

"A trailblazer as the first Pope in history from the southern hemisphere, His Holiness' belief in the goodness of people was as unshakeable as his devotion to the Church. He was held in affection by so many for his humility, and his ability to connect with people of all ages, nationalities and beliefs.

"His Holiness was outspoken on many of the pressing issues of our time such as climate change, the death penalty and the rise of artificial intelligence. He would regularly engage with world leaders and hold them to account for their words and actions.

"Pope Francis recognised and championed the virtue of compassion and advocated for poor and marginalised communities across the world. He brought comfort, assurance and hope to many.

"I know people will take comfort from the solidarity of their communities at this very difficult time. I share the sorrow of the Catholic community, in Scotland and worldwide, in mourning the loss of His Holiness. May he rest in peace."

Archbishop Cushley

The Archbishop of St Andrews & Edinburgh, the Most Reverend Leo Cushley, said: "I am deeply saddened to hear of The Holy Father's death this morning.

"He shared Christ's mercy and compassion to all, especially the poor and the vulnerable. "He emphasised our duty to protect God's creation for future generations and he worked tirelessly, often through illness and infirmity, to seek unity in a divided world.

"Through the synods held during his Pontificate he wished us to learn again to listen to each other as children of God and heirs to the same life of grace.

"He called for peace on earth: may the living Lord now grant him the peace of eternal rest."

A Requiem Mass for Pope Francis will be celebrated by Archbishop Cushley at St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, on Monday 28 April.

Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, said: "May I express my condolences to the Catholic Church in Scotland following the news of the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. We recall with gratitude the hospitality extended by His Holiness to representatives of the Church of Scotland and also the occasion of the Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace made by Pope Francis to South Sudan in the company of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2023.

"In recalling his contribution to Christian witness, we hear

renewed the call made by His Holiness in *Laudato si'* to care for the earth as our common home, and in *Fratelli tutti* to discover the presence of Christ in each human being. We join with all Christian people in the prayer of Pope Francis:

“Grant that we Christians may live the Gospel,
discovering Christ in each human being,
recognizing him crucified
in the sufferings of the abandoned
and forgotten of our world,
and risen in each brother or sister
who makes a new start.
Amen.

“May the blessed memory of Francis continue to serve as an example to the faithful people of God in our shared pilgrimage and in our common task of caring for God’s creation. May he rest in peace.”

Primus of Scottish Episcopal Church

The Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Most Reverend Mark Strange, has offered a message of condolence upon the death of Pope Francis on Easter Monday.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with all in the Roman Catholic Church today as they mourn the death of Pope Francis,” said the Primus.

“His generosity and love for all of God’s Creation and his willingness to be open and approachable allowed him to get close to people, and to love and be loved by so many. The joy on the faces in St Peter’s Square yesterday as he gave the Easter Blessing will be something dearly held as the mourning begins for this remarkable servant of God.

“When the Anglican Primates met in Rome last year, he spent time talking to us, listened to the questions we asked and he

answered us. This positive dialogue encouraged us all and we felt able to share with him our thoughts , as he did with us. This was clearly one of his gifts that enabled such conversations to take place between many of the world's churches.

“May he now Rest in Peace.”

All flags on UK Government Buildings will be flown at half mast today until 8.00pm on Tuesday 22 April.

The Presiding Officer of The Scottish Parliament has ordered flags at The Scottish Parliament to be flown at half mast as a mark of respect.



Casa Rosada (Argentina Presidency of the Nation) Wikimedia Commons